

Education Workforce Council

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 3 Tachwedd 2020
Petitions Committee | 3 November 2020

Reference: RS20/14079-5

Petition Number: [P-05-1033](#)

Petition title: Abolish Education Workforce Council (EWC) registration fees and completely reform its organisation

Text of petition: The registration fee is regressive and deducted from our wages on behalf of the EWC and Government. It is the same if you are full time, proportional or part time. It is a tax on education professionals. The EWC is not a representative body, it has failed to provide comprehensive CPD or promised bursaries for career enhancement. It is not accountable to, or representative of, its registrants. It is a regulatory body, accountable only to the Minister, so there should be no registration fee.

Additional information: The annual cost of registration is £45 with a reduced fee of £15 for support workers. The fee is the same if you are full time, proportional or part time. The fee is based on a tax year from April to March so those in their first year of teaching or youth work or on short term contracts must pay twice in September and April. There is no partial fee for those on limited contracts. The EWC is not a representative body or a professional association for those it registers. The EWC is not democratically accountable to its registrants and its governing body is not representative of those it registers. Teachers in HE and the private sector are not regulated by the EWC and pay no registration fees and the vast majority of headteachers in schools and managers in FE, the highest paid staff in the sector, do not need to register or pay the fee even if they have constant and lengthy contact with learners. This is plainly unfair and we call for the total abolition of all EWC registration fees.



1. Origins of the Education Workforce Council (EWC)

The Education Workforce Council (EWC) was established by the [Education \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) and took up its functions in **April 2015**. It **replaced the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW)**, which was the previous registration and regulatory body for teachers in maintained schools in Wales.

The Welsh Government's rationale for creating the EWC was to **recognise the role of a wider number of professions within education**. Learning support assistants, lecturers and support assistants in further education colleges, and latterly youth workers, youth support workers and work-based learning practitioners were all added to the requirement to register in order to practice.

2. Registration fees

Prior to the EWC's formation, teachers paid £45 for their annual registration with the GTCW, although the Welsh Government provided local authorities with funding to subsidise £33 of this amount, meaning teachers' contribution was £12.

From **2016-17, teachers' contribution to their registration fee increased to £45**. This was because the Welsh Government wanted to redistribute funding it provided to subsidise teachers' contributions, in order to support the costs of the EWC's main functions as well as reduce the overall amount paid by all registrants in totality.

The current contribution registrants make to their annual registration fees is detailed on the [EWC's website](#):

- £45: School teachers, Further Education teachers, Work-based learning practitioners, Youth workers.
- £15: School learning support workers, Further Education learning support workers, Youth support workers.

The Minister's letter highlights that the requirement to register with a regulatory body is common for many professions. The Welsh Government's [2017 consultation document](#) on registration fees for the education workforce included a table setting out the annual fees of other professions. This includes an annual fee of £120 for nurses and midwives and £90 for speech therapists and physiotherapists.

3. The EWC as a professional body

The Education (Wales) Act 2014 sets the following two principal aims for the EWC:

- a) to contribute to improving the standards of teaching and the quality of learning in Wales, and
- b) to maintain and improve standards of professional conduct amongst teachers and persons who support teaching and learning in Wales.

During the scrutiny of the Education (Wales) Act 2014 in Bill form as it was passing through the Senedd in 2013, the then Children and Young People Committee concluded there was an **imbalance in the functions the Act gives the EWC in respect of these aims**. The Committee recommended that the Minister should give further consideration to the EWC having a greater role for professional learning and standards amongst teachers.

The EWC itself has called for it to have responsibility for developing and setting the professional standards for teachers in Wales, arguing that it does not have comparable functions to its counterparts in other countries which limits the scope to completely fulfil its role.

The EWC's remit was expanded in 2017 to make it responsible for accrediting initial teacher education (ITE) programmes in Wales. However, **responsibility for setting professional standards for teachers remains with the Welsh Government** whilst professional learning is predominantly taken forward by the regional consortia.

The Children, Young People and Education Committee recommended in its 2017 Teachers' professional learning and education inquiry that the EWC be given responsibility for professional standards. The Welsh Government rejected this recommendation, saying the EWC is a 'relatively young organisation' and it is 'important that EWC is given the time to focus on their existing core functions'.

4. The EWC's membership

As the Minister's letter outlines, the Education Workforce Council (Membership and Appointment) (Wales) Regulations 2014 set out how members of the EWC are appointed. There are currently **14 members of the EWC**, although the Welsh Ministers can vary this number by an Order.

The **Welsh Ministers appoint seven members directly** and seven from a list of nominations made by organisations listed in Schedule 2 of the Regulations. The Welsh Ministers must ensure, so far as is possible, that of the 7 appointed from the nominated list, **4 are nominated from the trade unions** listed in Part 1 to Schedule 2.

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